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TITLE: INFORMATION SEARCH METHOD AND SYSTEM THEREFOR

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Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0002] In recent years, WWW (World Wide Web) systems have become popular for utilizing networks such as the Internet. A WWW system comprises WWW servers each for providing a variety of information, and client terminals connected to the WWW servers through the Internet for receiving information provided therefrom. The respective WWW servers open their unique Web pages, such that a user can access a Web page by specifying URL (Uniform Resource Locator) corresponding to the Web page to a browser program running on a client terminal. The browser can display multimedia data such as text, image data, video data, audio data and so on included in the Web page thus acquired on a display device of the client terminal. A Web page is described using a structural description language called HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language), so that another Web page can be accessed through its URL set in a Web page.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0020] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating the configuration of a system according to this embodiment. The system has a plurality of WWW servers 102 for providing information to a network such as the Internet; a plurality of client terminals 101 for accessing information provided by the WWW servers; and mark management servers 103 for managing a variety of marks, wherein they are all interconnected through the network. The mark herein referred to means still image data, and is assumed to be image data which allows the user to visually understand what the image data means when it is displayed. For example, the mark may be a logo of a credit card company, an award mark issued by a Web page evaluating organization, a recommendation mark, a symbol mark of a self-governing body, or the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0022] The internal storage device 2014 stores a mark creating program 20143, a mark management DB control program 20141 and an operating system 20142. The mark creating program 20143 fetches a specified mark image from the mark image DB 2022 in response to a mark transmission request from the WWW server 102, embeds the mark image with information such as an identifier of the mark, stores the specified mark identifier and information on a Web page to which this mark is attached (mounted) in the mark management DB 2021 through the mark management DB control program 20141, and transmits the mark image embedded with the information to the WWW server 102.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0024] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating the internal configuration of the WWW server 102. The WWW server 102 comprises a processing unit 301 such as PC, WS or the like; an external storage device 302 such as HDD; input devices 303 such as a keyboard, a mouse and so on; and an output device 304 such as a display. The processing unit 301 includes an interface 3011 for connection to a network; a

processor 3012 for processing associated with the WWW server 102; a memory 3013 for temporarily storing a program; an internal storage device 3014 for storing programs and data; and an interface 3015 for connection with input and output devices. The external storage device 302 stores a Web page DB 3021, while the Web page DB 3021 stores a plurality of Web pages managed by the WWW server 102. The internal storage device 3014 stores a Web page creating program 30143, a Web page DB control program 30141, a mark acquiring program 30144 and an operating system 30142. The Web page creating program 30143 creates a Web page in accordance with instructions from the user through the input device 303, and attaches an acquired mark image to the created Web page which is then stored in the Web page DB 3021 through the Web page DB control program 30141. The Web page DB control program 30141 accesses the Web page DB 3021 in accordance with a request from the Web page creating program 30143, as well as accesses the Web page DB 3021 in response to a request from a client terminal 101 to read a requested Web page therefrom, and sends the read Web page to the client terminal 101. The mark acquiring program 30144 issues a mark transmission request to the mark management server 103 in response to a request from the Web page creating program 30143, and passes an acquired mark image to the Web page creating program 30143.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0026] FIG. 5 is a table showing a data structure for the mark management DB 2021. Each record in the mark management DB 2021 is composed of a mark ID 501; a Web page URL 502 and a page name 503. The mark ID 501 is an identifier for each mark image stored in the mark image DB 2022. The Web page URL 502 is the URL of a Web page to which the mark is attached. The page name 503 may be a name, entry information or the like which shows the contents of the Web page.